

Zetsubou no Hana: The Flower Of Despair

VraieEsprit

Bleach

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Zetsubou no Hana: The Flower Of Despair

VraieEsprit

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Summary

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Description

Kira and Momo oneshot - the aftermath of betrayal hangs heavy over the heads of two of Seireitei's Vice Captains - but in very different ways.

1. Zetsubou no Hana: The Flower Of Despair

Zetsubou no Hana
(The Flower of Despair)
A Hinamori and Kira oneshot

Sometimes strength can only be found in darkness...

This was inspired during the writing of Rain Dragon and in particular by Kira's obvious fondness for Hinamori and the most recent manga chapter involving him and a certain bird-like arrancar. The Flower of Despair is the marigold of 3-Bantai. It's just a one off scene but its one idea of what might have happened while Renji and Hitsugaya were in the real world chasing arrancar, after Momo woke up from her coma. I don't usually write oneshots, but since this was never going to be a full length story, I figured I'd share it anyhow

Enough for today.

Kira Izuru dropped Wabisuke down onto the floor, running his fingers through his thick blond hair as he struggled to get his breath. Though the days were cooling, sweat was still pouring off his body and he knew that, the more he pushed himself, the closer he was getting to unlocking the secrets his elusive weapon held deep inside.

Though he had often had his misgivings, now his resolve was firmly set.

He would get stronger.

He would face Ichimaru.

And somehow, he would win — or die in the attempt.

“Kira-kun?” A hesitant voice from the doorway made him start, grasping up Wabisuke's hilt as he swung around. He was on edge, he realised, every nerve taut and straining from his intense training routines, but as he met the gaze of his visitor, he sighed, sinking back against the wall and allowing his weapon to fall harmlessly against the leg of his blood-specked *hakama*.

“Hinamori-kun.” He murmured, and the girl nodded, eying him warily as she slipped her slim body fully into the training room. She had lost weight, and there were still shadows under her eyes, Kira

realised, even as she tried to raise a smile for him, and anger shot through him like a burning flame as he remembered exactly the events that had caused them. Hinamori had never had that expression on her face before Aizen had started messing around with her mental state, after all. Aizen was to blame. Aizen and Ichimaru... for everything.

“It’s late.” She murmured. “I thought... didn’t you say you were done training for today? Kira-kun...”

“There’s not any time to be ‘done.’” Kira said flatly. “There’s a war coming, after all. I’d rather not die in it, if it’s all the same to you.”

“Kira-kun...” Hinamori’s expression became all the more tragic, and Kira’s bruised heart clenched at the sorrow and confusion that still clouded her dark eyes.

“When will things ever get back to how they should be?” She asked plaintively — a question she had asked so many times before. Since the moment she had come out of her coma, she had repeated the same things, over and over, as if somehow she could elicit a response that would set her poor mind at rest. When Kira had tried, as gently as he knew how, to broach the subject of Aizen’s betrayal, she had only grasped at the sleeves of his *hakama* in desperation, begging him to do something — anything! — to bring her former Captain back to his senses. The depth of her delusion had hurt him almost as much as the blade that had pierced her chest had hurt her in that terrible, defining moment.

Even now, she still believed he was coming back. That somehow, it would all be forgiven. And somehow... somehow, Aizen was still someone she could admire.

Kira knew how that felt. Too well, he knew. But he had also learnt to overcome it. There was no space in his heart for sentimentality towards the past. Only a strong, gritted resolve towards the future. A future in which, he hoped, he would finally put to rest the silver ghost that still haunted his thoughts.

“What do you want me to say?” He asked now, his tones soft, yet edged with something that had not been there before Ichimaru’s rebellion. “No matter what I tell you, you still say the same thing. When are you going to accept it, Hinamori-kun? Aizen isn’t coming back. Aizen isn’t going to suddenly go back to the person we all believed him to be... he’s not that person and he never was. What will it take to make you see that? Aizen is a demon. Soul Society exists to take demons out. That’s all there is to it. There’s nothing else to say.”

“Kira-kun.” Tears glittered on Hinamori’s lashes, and Kira sighed,

rubbing his temples as a dull ache began to spread across the base of his skull.

"If you won't accept it, there's nothing for me to say." He said wearily. "I'm sorry, Hinamori-kun. I can't smile and pretend and lie to you. You're my friend. I wouldn't do that. It would be cruel. I'm not that way."

Hinamori moved across to the window, gazing out at the star-speckled sky.

"It's Ichimaru's fault." She murmured. "Somehow... I don't know how. Ichimaru's the one who... I know it. He stood there, you know, and watched as Aizen-taichou... I know it was his doing. He made Aizen-taichou... I'm sure of it. Only noone will listen to me. Noone... noone at all."

"That's because what you're saying is ridiculous!" Kira exclaimed, his frayed nerves finally giving in to his impatience. "Hinamori-kun, please, stop doing this to yourself! Until you accept it, you can't heal! People are worrying about you — for God's sake, please... stop believing in that bastard and come to your senses?"

Hinamori swung around, staring at him in shock at the uncharacteristic harshness of his tone and the rough nature of his language, and Kira sighed, regretting his outburst but too tired to take it back.

"I know you were close to Ichimaru-taichou, Kira-kun." At length the girl spoke, her tones soft and faintly wavery as she struggled with her emotions. "But even so..."

"It has nothing to do with it." Kira said blackly. "Ichimaru was a traitor. Aizen was a traitor. Tousen was a traitor. Those are things that I am never going to forget, no matter what happens from hereon in. I'm not trying to excuse Ichimaru, or say that he's innocent. I know he isn't. But then, I've come to terms with that. I've faced it. You refuse to face the truth. That's the difference. You simply won't see it."

"But Kira-kun..."

"Listen." Kira cut across her, grabbing up Wabisuke and waving it angrily in her direction. "Do you know why I'm working so hard, Hinamori? Do you understand why it is I've pushed myself, day in and day out since Abarai-kun went to the Real World and since all of this began happening? Do you have any idea what kind of pain I deal with, day by day, trying to get to grips with the fact I was of no use whatsoever when the original rebellion took place? I know Ichimaru-

taichou betrayed my squad, Seireitei, and that he betrayed *me*. It's etched into my soul, now, how I trusted in him and he let me down. Do you think I'll ever let myself be taken for that kind of a fool again?"

His eyes narrowed, and he shook his head.

"I hate what Wabisuke stands for. I always have." He said blackly, his voice shaking with the force of his emotions. "I hate the fact that he's dark and dismal and he brings out the worst things in me. But I've come to realise that those things also characterise the squad I'm supposed to guide. War is depressing. Fighting is dark. There is no other way around it."

He tore his fingers roughly across the marigold that marked his adjutant's badge, then,

"The flower of despair." He said bitterly. "Fitting, don't you think, for a squad about to go into a war against the man who made them what they were?"

Hinamori stared at him, her eyes big and full of pain, and even this uncharacteristically vulnerable expression wrenched through to the depths of Kira's soul.

He sighed, struggling to rein in his emotions.

"I'm weak." He muttered. "And because of it, I need Wabisuke in order to fight. I need him to be stronger, in order to have any chance of being a part of this battle. I'm for Soul Society, no matter what. I decided that the morning I woke up and realised my Captain didn't give a damn what happened to me or if I ended up dead in the process of him carrying out his schemes. So that's what I've been doing, day in, day out. Training. Preparing. Gaining strength. Gaining purpose."

His eyes narrowed purposefully.

"There's only one goal for me at the end of it, Hinamori-kun." He concluded softly, tilting his *zanpakutou* so that the light glinted forbiddingly off the weapon's sharply angled surface. "That goal is Ichimaru Gin's head caught in the hook of Wabisuke's blade. Do you understand now? That's the only way any of us can be. We're going to face them again this Winter. And I'm not going to be so easily cast aside."

"What's happened to you, Kira-kun?" Hinamori looked distressed.

“What... what’s happened to us both? What happened to the times you and Abarai-kun and I would simply spend time together, talking or laughing or discussing the latest news? What happened to all the dreams we had about getting stronger and becoming Captains and Vice Captains to serve Soul Society? What happened to that?”

“The Captains we wanted to be like betrayed us in cold blood.” Kira said flatly, loosing his grip on his weapon suddenly so that it clattered roughly to the ground at his feet. “The whole thing was an illusion. A lie from start to finish. I’ve no use for those kind of dreams any more, Hinamori. I’ve learnt that lesson. I won’t forget it again.”

“You’ve never called me Hinamori.” Hinamori sounded forlorn. “And you’ve never spoken to me like that. Are you really so angry with me, Kira-kun? Do you hate me so much, because I want to believe in A... Aizen-taichou?”

“Hate you?” Kira stared at her, for a moment struck speechless by her question. Then he sighed, closing his eyes as he struggled to combat his own emotions.

“Of course I don’t hate you.” He murmured. “What kind of stupid question is that? I’ve never hated you. I never could — don’t you understand that? Even if I’m weak, even if I become strong — even if the darkness overwhelms all of us and there’s nothing but hate left to prove we’re still alive. I’ll never hate *you*, Hinamori-kun. But I’ll also never forget the day I ran out of Central 46 and left you at the mercy of those monsters. I’ll never, ever forget that moment, when I realised exactly how much my cowardice had done. I’m not going to be that Shinigami ever again. *Noone* is going to manipulate me ever again. And I will get strong enough. Somehow. I’ll get strong enough and I’ll prove it to them myself, with my own blade. That’s all. It’s not about hating you. It’s about hating them. And I do hate them. More than, sometimes, I can even stand.”

Hinamori looked sad.

“You really don’t think Aizen-taichou is coming back, do you?” She said in a small voice, and Kira resisted the urge to grab her and shake her hard.

“Aizen has made his decision.” He said instead, his tones low and strange even to his ears. “Please, Hinamori-kun — you have no idea how much it hurts when you keep saying that you trust him. After all he’s done to you — after all they did to us — yet the first words out of your mouth when you woke up were ‘Aizen-taichou’. Even after everything — what does it take to free you from that curse? Dammit,

how strong do I have to get before I can snap you out of it and make you realise that you're not his puppet or his Vice Captain any more?!"

"Kira-kun?" Hinamori looked startled, and Kira took a deep breath into his lungs, shaking his head.

"Every time you say it, you alienate those of us who actually care about you." He murmured. "Hitsugaya-taichou. Me. Abarai-kun. Matsumoto-san. Many more up and down the Gotei 13. Don't you even understand that? You're chasing after the ghost of a man who never really existed. A monster — a wolf in sheep's clothing who wanted to sacrifice you to further his evil schemes. Yet you keep believing in him. Why, dammit? *Why?*!"

His voice shook, and he swallowed hard, aware that his weariness coupled with the sudden flood of emotion had begun to crack through his weakened defences. He closed his eyes, fighting back tears of his own, and as he did so, Hinamori crossed the room, placing her hand gently on his arm.

"I'm sorry, Kira-kun." She said, her voice full of guilt and regret. "But... its not that easy. Aizen-taichou... was... without him I..."

She sighed, lowering her arm.

"If he's not coming back, I don't know how to carry on." She whispered, and Kira's eyes snapped open, horror and anger competing for dominance as he stared at her in alarm.

"What are you saying?" He demanded, grabbing her by the arms. "Hinamori-kun... are you saying that you... you wish he had killed you? That you wish you hadn't been rescued, after all?"

"I... I don't know." Hinamori's voice was little more than a breath on the air, and Kira was suddenly aware once more of how fragile his friend had become. "I just... I don't know anything any more, that's all. Everything is different. Everyone is like a stranger. The atmosphere is full of anger and anxiety and... and I don't understand any more. I just... I don't know what I should do. That's all."

Kira took a deep breath, struggling to calm himself as he registered the trembling of his companion's body. Slowly, and not without misgivings, he loosened his grip on her wrists, instead resting his hands on her shoulders as he looked her in the eye.

"It's all right." He said quietly. "I'll get strong enough for both of us, if that's what it takes to free you from him. If he's dead, he can't hurt you any more. If he's dead, you can heal. We both can. Once they're gone, we can move past it and go forward again. It's hard for

me too, Hinamori. Believe me, it is. But that's why I'm working so hard as I am. It's the only way I can come to terms with it... with everything that they've done."

Hinamori sighed, sinking against him as though her feeble strength had given out, and Kira hesitated, then hugged her gingerly, all too aware of how close her body was to his.

But even as she looked to him for comfort, as a friend may seek another friend, he knew, deep down, that her heart was still filled with Aizen. The Captain she had admired and dedicated her life to would not be so easily erased, not even by Wabisuke's determined blade, and the truth of this fact struck Kira to the core.

"I will find a way to rescue you from this, Hinamori." He murmured, resolution hardening inside him as he met her gaze. "Not just me, either. We all will. We'll all find a way to put an end to your nightmare. I promise. Aizen'll never be allowed to hurt you again.

No matter what."